

feed chickens this morning," he answered gravely.

"Oh!" Mrs. Stevens gave a little meaning laugh and looked at Delancy and then at Phyllis. Delancy felt his face grow red under her scrutiny. Phyllis was apparently very composed. "Yes," she said, "he actually knew nothing about it."

"But he does now?" and Mrs. Stevens gathered her reins together. "You are coming back with me?" she said to Delancy. Miss Van Hasset is coming over this afternoon."

Delancy saw an opportunity. "If Miss Van Hasset will allow me I will wait and go over with her this afternoon?"

Phyllis intimated that he might and Mrs. Stevens after another glance at Delancy which told him that she intended making it very uncomfortable for him on the first available opportunity, drove off.

It was about three o'clock when Miss Van Hasset and Delancy reached the temporary abode of their friends. Jack was, as they had been warned, in the hammock.

"He is asleep," whispered Delancy to his companion. "Wait here a moment, please." He rode carefully over to the hammock and began tickling the nose of his sleeping friend with the tip of his riding whip.

"Hang the skeeters," muttered Stevens. Phyllis laughed in spite of a warning glance from Delancy, who returned to the attack.

Stevens gave a great sigh and turned over. Delancy tickled his nose again and this time successfully, for the sleeper slowly came to a sitting posture. "Oh, it's you, Neddy," he remarked. "I thought at first it was a mosquito and then was quite certain that it was a fly. Madge told me you were coming over. She told me that you were making—Why! how do you do, Miss Van Hasset. I did not see you before. Mr. Delancy has generally managed, during my somewhat long acquaintance with him, to get between any nice girl that I saw and myself. There is only one occasion when he was foiled and that lead to my getting married. But, come up to the house and see Madge."

He lead the way, had their horses

taken away and then left them alone on the verandah while he went in search of his wife.

"Is it not shameful," Delancy remarked. "Whenever that man does not want to work he invents some hideous artistic reason and gives it to her to swallow. Look at him, to-day! Asleep in the hammock. The trouble is that he is not obliged to paint for a living and consequently he does not pursue fame as steadily as he might. That is what his wife most earnestly desires for him and what he might easily have if he only exerted himself in the slightest"

Then Mrs Stevens appeared and they went down into the garden again.

That evening when Stevens and Delancy were alone the former suddenly said: "You want to look out, old man."

"What for?" queried Delancy.

"You have heard the story of 'Undivided Farm?'"

"Oh" said Delancy, perceiving what he was driving at. "Yes, I have heard it."

"You are not an eldest son?"

"Of course not."

"Then don't burn your fingers."

"Oh, I am not going to," and Delancy laughed confidently.

Nearly two weeks sped by, very quickly Delancy found. He saw a good deal of Phyllis but he kept Stevens' warning ringing in his ears, and congratulated himself on having succeeded in conducting himself properly. The day before he was to leave Pocohasset he spent the afternoon with Phyllis at the Stevens'. They started for home at dusk. All at once her horse stumbled, fell on its knees and threw her from its back. With a sharp cry of horror Delancy flung himself from his horse and rushed to where the little darked robed figure was lying in the middle of the road. Before he could reach her she was on her feet with a merry little laugh.

"Why!" she cried, looking at him, "what makes you so pale? You are as white as a ghost."

"You are not hurt?" he gasped, ignoring her question.

"Hurt? No, not in the least." All at once the reason for his agitation flashed upon her. The ground seemed to reel